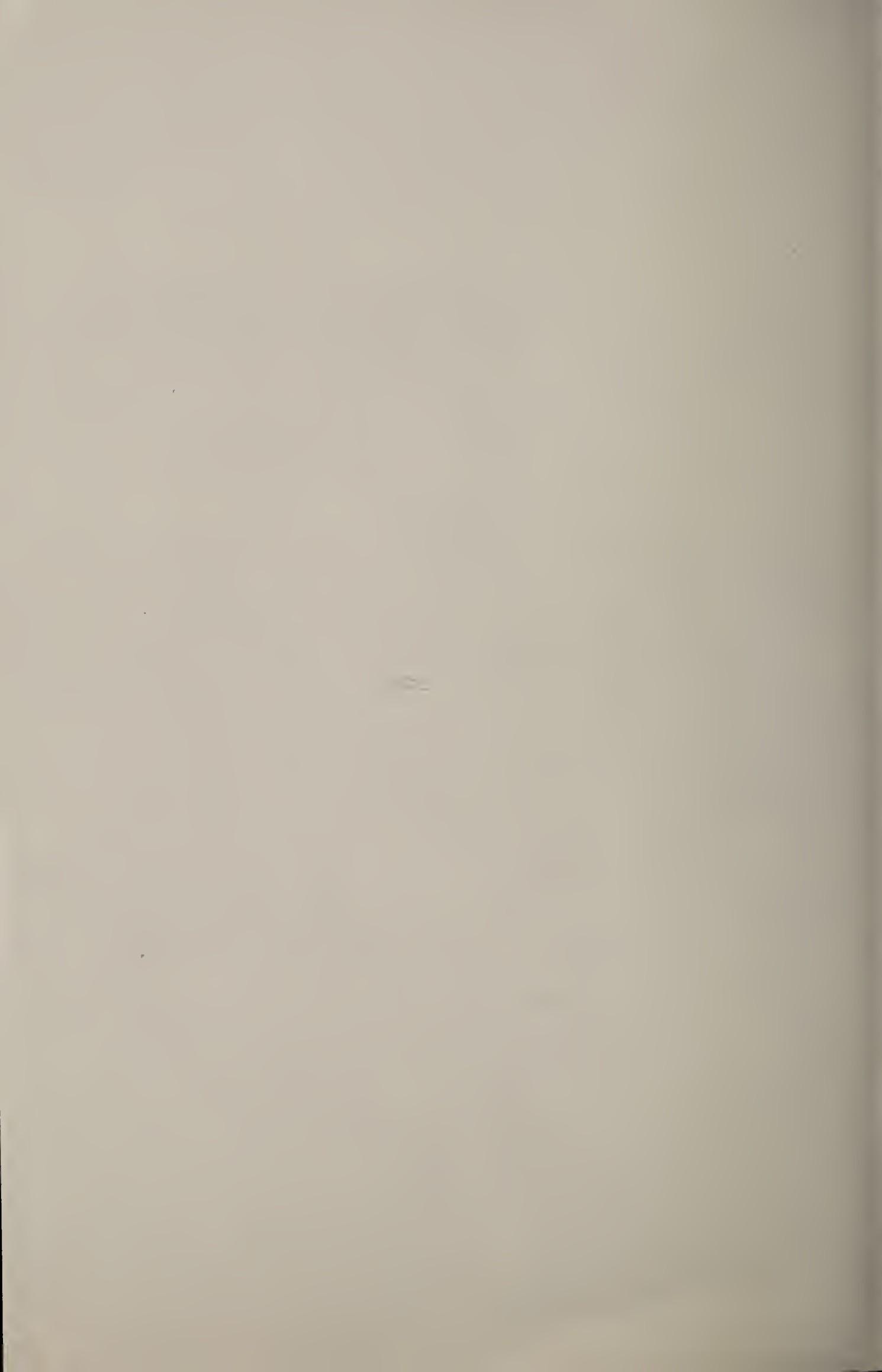


The Broadway Cemetery



THE BROADWAY CEMETERY

Prepared by the Staff of the
Public Library of Fort Wayne and Allen County
1954

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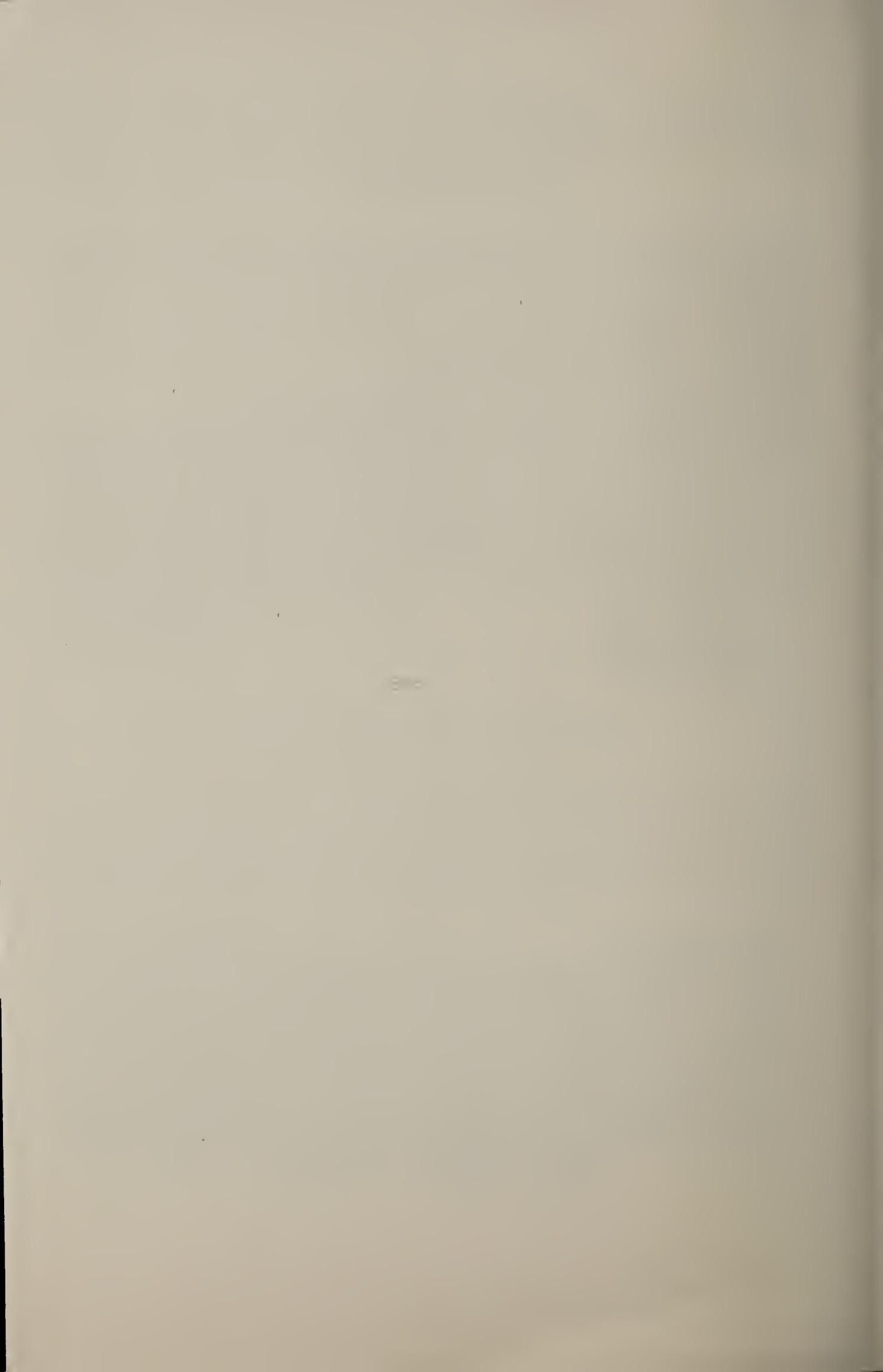


Mrs. Charles Reynolds

FOREWORD

The area now comprising McCulloch Park was once the Broadway Cemetery. Used as a burying ground from 1837 to 1885, the cemetery was then closed, and many of the remains were reburied in Lindenwood Cemetery. The small park, however, is still the final resting place of Samuel Bigger, seventh governor of Indiana.

The following unsigned letter to the editor appeared in the FORT WAYNE JOURNAL on December 10, 1885, when it was first proposed that the Broadway Cemetery be abandoned. The Boards and the Staff of the Public Library of Fort Wayne and Allen County present this pamphlet in the hope that it will prove interesting to readers. Grammar, spelling, and punctuation have been changed to conform to current usage.



To the Editor:

While preparing a report for the lot owners of Lindenwood Cemetery, I had occasion recently to learn something of the unwritten history of the older Fort Wayne cemeteries. I wrote to the Honorable Hugh McCulloch for some information in regard to the early history of the Broadway Cemetery and its possible future. In reply, I received the following letter, which is of such general interest to the public that I thought it should be published. The letter will be of special interest to those who have friends whose remains are still lying in that desecrated ground. The Broadway Cemetery was once dear to them because of the loved ones laid there years ago amid tears and sorrow. But now the place is the abode of owls and bats and their more worthless associates, the tramps and other vagabonds that infest it. Vandals have destroyed the monuments and tombstones, while they have used the deserted vaults and excavated graves as hiding places for disgraceful revelry and debauchery as well as for escape from justice.

Washington, D. C.
November 24, 1885

Dear Sir:

Soon after I became a resident of Fort Wayne, I discovered that there was no public burial ground either in the town or near it. Interments had been made and were being made in a lot to which the town had no title; consequently, there could be no assurance that the bodies buried there would remain undisturbed.

Therefore, in 1837 (if I rightly recollect) I bought from Judge Hanna four acres of land near the town. I enclosed the area with a handsome fence and laid the land off into burial lots. Some lots were set apart for the poor; others were offered for sale. Perhaps most lots were sold before Lindenwood Cemetery was formed. The proceeds of the sales were applied to repay the money I had expended on the purchase and improvement of the grounds. For my trouble I expected and received no compensation.

The sale of lots ceased soon after Lindenwood Cemetery was

established. As there were no funds for keeping the grounds in order, and as many of the bodies which had been buried there were removed to the new cemetery, the graves which remained were neglected. They are now, I understand, in a disreputable condition. As the lots were sold for burial purposes only, the property reverts to me when it ceases to be used for burial purposes. Under these circumstances, I have offered to relinquish my right to it to the city of Fort Wayne, upon the agreement of the city to enclose, beautify, and maintain it permanently as a public park.

Very truly yours,
HUGH McCULLOCH

The necessity for a place of common burial had become most critical, as the writer can attest from his own recollections, when Mr. McCulloch stepped into the breach and advanced the money to purchase the ground. He fixed the price of lots at a very reasonable and satisfactory sum, and he placed James Richey, a very clever and accommodating Irishman, in charge of the grounds as sexton. Richey was to bury the dead when required, and he was to rebury the remains removed from the sandbank near the St. Mary's River, mentioned in Mr. McCulloch's letter. Jimmy Richey was accommodating, honest, and faithful to his trust. He and the plain old graveyard were ever-present to all visitors, and they seemed to lose their identities and usefulness at about the same time. One passed to his reward, and the other remains a cankering sore that ought to be and can be cured. Fortunately, the city council now has the matter under consideration, and it will doubtless devise some scheme to change the area into a place of beauty and a pleasant resort. Fort Wayne is a city of thirty or forty thousand inhabitants; this large population is composed largely of artisans and other industrious classes. Many of these laborers and their families reside in small apartments and have few opportunities to enjoy the exercise and fresh air so necessary to life and health. The improvement of these grounds, limited as they are, would furnish a breathing place, at least.

FORT WAYNE JOURNAL, December 10, 1885

